



# *The Insider*

[www.senate.mi.gov/switalski](http://www.senate.mi.gov/switalski)

## **Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10**

**May 13, 2005**

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at [senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov) or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

---

### **Mickey's Letter Bag**

---

Dear Senator Switalski,

In response to the modifications to the Michigan Merit Award in Senate Bill 442 that you introduced, I feel that it serves a definite and valid purpose to ensure that students would not only attend college but also receive a degree. However, my perception is that the program would remain flawed even after the bill was passed.

The major flaw that exists in this bill is that by extending the scholarship from \$2,500 to \$4,000 is that it is not going to improve the state's financial status. I realize that the additional funding that could come from federal scholarship sources supports a good cause, in fact, such funding could be extremely helpful to me since I am a junior in high school who will be attending college in the next few years. Despite this, I feel that retaining an economically strong and stable state outweighs the loss of receiving an addition \$1,500 in scholarship money considering the fact that the state is currently experiencing a deficit of \$773 million dollars for the upcoming fiscal year.

An additional point I would like to make is that it may be of greater benefit to college bound students for the state to retain the additional scholarship money anyway. This is because that additional money could be utilized to fund universities and as a result cause tuition rates in general to drop. In return, a college education would become cheaper and require a smaller financial investment which may eliminate the necessity for the scholarship entirely.

Overall, my feelings are that this bill, in its current state, should be thrown out. However, that is not to say that this bill isn't worth revising to accommodate society's current financial crisis.

Sincerely,  
Charles Daubenspeck  
Roseville

Dear Senator Switalski,

I urge you to support House Bills 4624 and 4625 and Senate Bills 394 and 395. These bills will make all Michigan workplaces, bars and restaurants smoke-free. All Michigan residents have the right to breathe clean air. It's time the Michigan legislature protected that right.

Secondhand smoke isn't just an annoyance; it's a real health hazard. At least 3,000 Michigan residents will die from its effects this year alone. Every time you breathe in a puff of second hand smoke, you're also inhaling 4,000 chemicals including cyanide, ammonia and arsenic. Secondhand smoke is known to cause a number of serious illnesses such as lung cancer and heart disease.

Many states across the country have passed statewide laws protecting their citizens from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Yet, our state's citizens remain exposed to this dangerous substance. It is the responsibility of the legislature to protect all Michigan workers from secondhand smoke, whether they work in a factory, office, bar or restaurant. No one should have to choose between their paycheck and their health.

I hope you will do the right thing and vote for smoke-free legislation in Michigan. I look forward to hearing back from you with your position on this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Thaddeus J. Tunich  
Clinton Township

---

### Regulating Violent Video Game Sales

---

On May 12, the Michigan Senate passed a package of bills (Senate Bills 249, 416, 463 and 464) that would prevent retailers from selling or renting violent or sexually explicit video games to kids under the age of 17. The bills head to the Michigan House for further consideration.

These bills were controversial and were hotly debated not only on the Senate floor, but also within my office. I would like to share a conversation with you between myself and my staff during a staff meeting on Tuesday.

**Mickey:** All rightly then. Next topic of business is the bills that would ban the sale or rental of violent or sexually explicit video games to anyone under the age of 17. The bills are probably coming up for a vote this week. What do you think?

**Zvonko:** These bills have a lot of flaws. Video games are being made the scape goat. The real problem is much larger and begins at home with the parents. It's not just video games. All kinds of things contribute to kids being violent. Shouldn't the parents know what their kids are up to? Who they hang out with? What they read? What video games they play? Violence in society has happened long before video games. This legislation is a cop-out for parents who fail to take a active role in raising their kids. You are not trying to really blame that on video games are you?

**Brad:** What about the violence on television? We don't ban kids from watching that. Doesn't this factor in the equation?

**Mickey:** Ok. But we can't fix every problem in society overnight. We are just talking about video games on these bills. Do you think kids should have access to some of these games?

**Zvonko:** The parents should decide what they can play.

**Mickey:** How can the parents watch them 24 hours a day?

**Zvonko:** That's their job.

**Mickey:** But we have to give them the tools for them to do the job.

**Zvonko:** And what are these tools?

**Mickey:** The bills would prevent retailers from selling or renting the games to minors but would give the parents the option of buying the games for their kids. This doesn't mean we are telling kids what game they can play. If their parents want them to play these games, their parents would buy the game for them. But at least this way, the parents have a choice and some control.

**Zvonko:** But are the bills constitutional? Similar bills have been struck down in other states.

**Mickey:** Good question. What makes this bill different? We should not just pass things to make people feel good if we can't defend them in court.

**Brad:** The committee posed that question to the attorneys of the Legislative Service Bureau and they made changes to the bill and now claim that it is now constitutional.

**Mickey:** Let's go with that but we better check it out in the meantime.

**Zvonko:** What about the penalties for retailers violating the law? Don't you think it is a bit excessive when we spend \$1.8 billion a year on Corrections and the Macomb County Jail just released a bunch of inmates because of overcrowding? How is this going to make it any better?

**Mickey:** I think you may have a point. Maybe up to a year in jail and \$5,000 fine is a bit excessive. We may want to moderate that for a first offense. It probably should be a graduated penalty where it gets worse for a repeat offender.

Now that the bills passed the Senate, it goes to the House, where they may make changes. Any final bill has to be agreed upon by both chambers and signed by the Governor. Any differences in the House and Senate versions have to be reconciled and a compromise bill must be signed by the Governor before the video game regulation would become law. What do you think about this issue? Write back and I will publish some of your responses in the next issue.

---

### **Mickey's TV Insider Show**

---

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

#### **Sterling Heights**

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

#### **Utica**

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

**Clinton Township**

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs  
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

**Roseville**

Various Times  
(Comcast Channel 18)

\*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

---

**Coffee Hours**

---

\*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

<b>May 23</b> <b>7-9 p.m.</b>	<b>June 6</b> <b>7-9 p.m.</b>
Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library (40900 Romeo Plank Drive) Clinton Township	Location: Sterling Heights Public Library (40255 Dodge Park) Sterling Heights

---

**Contact My Office**

---

**Website:** <http://www.senate.mi.gov/switalski>

**Email:** [senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov)

**Lansing Office**

Senator Mickey Switalski  
Senate District 10  
410 Farnum  
PO Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

(866)303-0110 toll free  
(517)373-7315  
Fax-(517)373-3126

**District Office**

28311 Utica Road  
Roseville, MI 48066

Monday through Friday  
9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

(586)774-2430  
Fax-(586)774-0012